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11 February 1964

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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*South Vietnam: Viet Cong activity continues to intensify.

Over the week end, Viet Cong units attacked two district capitals at opposite ends of the country. The capital in the far north was held for five hours by a force of two Viet Cong companies augmented by some 400 local tribesmen.

Throughout the entire country, the Viet Cong continue to undertake small-scale attacks and acts of sabotage in large numbers. Strategic hamlets have often been destroyed after little or no resistance by defending forces.

There has also been a marked step-up in terrorist bombing, much of it aimed specifically against US personnel.

The Communist drive, coupled with uncertainty generated by the latest changeover in Saigon, is probably affecting the morale of the people, the paramilitary forces, and possibly regular troops as well.

Reports from several critical provinces near Saigon indicate little real government progress and some further deterioration since the last Viet Cong offensive in late 1963. Several local military officials in these provinces appear to regard the coup as merely a continuing power struggle in Saigon, and are awaiting new orders rather than continuing the struggle.

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DAILY BRIEF

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Czechoslovakia: Discipline in regional and local party organizations is apparently breaking down, and public concern and passive resistance are rising as a result of unpopular aspects of the regime's new economic program.

The regime has been gradually unveiling a number of belt-tightening measures since the first of the year. An 8 February announcement called for increases in rents; price rises for some quality foodstuffs; the imposition of taxes on some pensions; and charges for formerly free medical supplies, school lunches, and school supplies.

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[redacted] country-wide discussions of the new measures have been so heated and disorderly that it has been impossible to carry on party business. This adverse reaction at the local level will probably be used by Novotny's opposition in the higher echelons of the party to discredit his leadership.

The regime reportedly fears violent popular reaction, but the US Embassy believes the situation, though serious, is not yet explosive. It considers that passive resistance by the public may negate the program's potential benefits.

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NOTES

Malaysia-Indonesia-Philippines: Sukarno, commenting on the inconclusive ministerial talks held in Bangkok from 5 to 10 February, has told Ambassador Jones that Indonesian guerrillas will remain in Malaysian Borneo until the Malaysian controversy is resolved. Between now and another ministerial meeting, probably in late February, talks will be held between Malaysia's Prime Minister Rahman and Philippine President Macapagal, and between Macapagal and Sukarno.

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Israel - Arab States: Israel is reported ready to begin testing at least one of three pumps it will use to divert Jordan River water from Lake Tiberias. When the test occurs, the Arabs will be faced for the first time with a visible diversion of water rather than with the preliminary construction that has gone on so far. There has been no indication of extraordinary activity on the Syrian side so far, and the Israelis are confident they can prevent any sabotage which would seriously disrupt their system.

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*Iraq--Kurds: The Kurdish insurgent leader Barzani has agreed to end the fighting in northern Iraq, according to Iraqi radio. Concurrently, President Arif said that Iraq will recognize Kurdish rights "within the Iraqi people's unity"--suggesting the Kurds will receive some form of autonomy. It is unlikely that full Kurdish demands will be realized, and elements of the Kurdish Democratic Party--the political wing of the Kurdish insurgent movement whose radical leaders have been at odds with Barzani--may repudiate the agreement he has reached with the central government.

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